



Illinois Department of Natural Resources

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USDA Awards \$8 million for Illinois Working Lands, Water and Wildlife Conservation Partnership Projects

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has awarded more than \$8 million in federal funds for the Illinois Working Lands, Water and Wildlife Conservation Partnership to protect working farmland, improve water quality, and increase and enhance wildlife habitat in rural Illinois.

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) has joined an alliance of partnering organizations including The Conservation Fund in planning and coordinating the projects that will be funded through the NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). Illinois partners have pledged more than \$11.2 million in matching funds to support the initiative, including more than \$1.7 million in financial and technical assistance from the IDNR.

“The IDNR is excited to receive this good news regarding funding through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, which will support on-the-ground projects that will increase the quantity and quality of habitat that can benefit a number of species of greatest concern here in Illinois,” said IDNR Director Colleen Callahan.

Focused on key conservation priority areas in Illinois, the partnership intends to build protected habitat corridors along targeted stream segments through use of permanent conservation easements on working farmland. Conservation practices will be implemented that connect farmland with protected natural lands, prevent runoff and improve water quality, advance agricultural practices that improve soil health, and support farmers and landowner partners. In addition, IDNR will implement soil health practices on IDNR-owned and managed lands that are leased for agricultural production.

The \$8 million RCPP award for Illinois is one of 48 awards for projects in 29 states totaling \$206 million nationwide. For more information on the RCPP:
<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/rcpp/>

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